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Sport Development and Community Development

Iain Lindsey & Andrew Adams

Introduction

The potential of sport to contribute to community development has increasingly gained global prominence in recent years. This alignment of sport with community development can be attributed to the general view of sport as morally benign (Coalter, 2007) and its increasing salience to both international bodies and national governments as a mechanism to achieve particular local policy objectives (Houlihan and Green, 2009). The United Nations (2003, p5), for example, states its belief that “sports programmes are also a cost-effective way to contribute significantly to health, education, development and peace and a powerful medium through which to mobilize societies”. Similarly Houlihan and Groeneveld (2011, p1) recognise the growing number of national governments seeking to utilise sport “in the pursuit of a range of pro-social policy objectives such as social inclusion, health improvement and community integration and safety”. While these authors highlight governments in the Global North, it is also the case that governments in the Global South are in increasing numbers recognising the potential contribution that sport can make to individual and community development, as Banda (2010) identifies is the case in Zambia for example.

Much of the positioning of sport, and its capacity to deliver, in relation to community development resonates with broader policy themes. Many community-orientated policy objectives, such as those associated with well-being and sustainability are difficult to define and as a result remain vague and shifting (Jordan, 2006, Stoker, 2006). Similarly, authors such as Coalter (2007) have raised concerns about the malleable way in which sport has been presented as contributing to a diffuse array of potential policy objectives. Sport also has links with the broader movement towards community and civil renewal, defined as “giving people a stronger sense of involvement in their communities and a greater say over their lives” (Stoker, 2004:7), that arguably rests on both active citizenship and partnership working. Likewise, positive representations of sport development have focused on the contribution of

multiple policy actors and bottom-up process of implementation that may benefit individual citizens and communities simultaneously (Frisby and Millar, 2002; Bolton et al., 2008; Charlton, 2010)

This chapter will critically analyse some of these important conceptual and policy themes that bind sport development to community development. The following section will examine the often simplistic use of the concept of community and outlines the theoretical architecture of social capital. The second section will identify the governance structures that are associated with sport and community development and consider the ways in which these structures may facilitate and constrain sport and community development efforts. These more conceptual and internationally-relevant sections will inform an in-depth analysis of sport and community development policies in a specific country: the UK. The concluding section of the chapter highlights the importance of political structure and country specific cultural determinants to be able to assess whether sport can contribute to community development.

Making sense of community

The term community can mean many things to many people. Community is not a single entity but is resplendent within its many dimensions, definitions and conceptualisations and reflects cultural, political and social aspects of national and international concern. Certainly in considering the many different uses of the term community and in particular how it can be conceived alongside sport development, is an understanding of both what is meant by the term itself and also how specific interpretations of community have been incorporated into particular policy agendas. It is worth noting that Plant, writing in the early 1970s, cautioned that community “...is so much a part of the stock in trade of social and political argument that it is unlikely that some non-ambiguous and non-contested definition of the notion can be given” (Plant, 1974: 13). Given this warning that community cannot easily be identified or specified as one single entity and can include a diverse range of individuals, the notion of a geographical community, in which “...very different world views can share the same geographical space” (East, 2002:169-70), becomes especially problematic for policymakers. Indeed much of the literature that examines

community development and sport participation tends to assume that geographical community is the community. Vail (2007) in her study of community tennis development in Canada, whilst extolling the virtues of community development models and need for empowered individuals operating within settings of appropriate capacity, makes no mention of what community is or can be taken to mean. Similarly Frisby and Millar (2002) highlight the difficulties in defining community development, but do not consider the problematics of defining community per se.

Furthermore Taylor (2003) has argued that the term community can be used descriptively, describing common interests which individuals might share becomes important; normatively, as a school of thought in making assumptions about the way individuals should live; and instrumentally, such that community becomes a proactive arm of policy implementation. In this sense a community may or may not be geographically located. Indeed Anderson (1991) has elaborated on the existence of 'imagined communities' which, as potentially large and dispersed groups of individuals, can develop high levels of group identification (particularly when pursuing a particular cause) that can lead to strong feelings of attachment and belonging (Whiteley, 1999). However, much of the literature concerning communities, their development and their involvement in development (Maloney, 1999, Nash, 2002, Taylor, 2003, Stoker, 2004) would suggest that communities once defined and clarified, will tend to operate in a normative way that dictates the moral climate of that community and consequently the behaviour of the individuals who are part of that community.

Taylor (2003) has argued that policy makers tend to confuse the descriptive and normative meanings of community, and then subsequently assume that this idea of community will 'naturally' facilitate the smooth implementation and execution of policy. For Taylor, policy makers make the assumption

...that common location or interests bring with them social and moral cohesion, a sense of security, and mutual trust. But they [the policymakers] also tend to go a step further and assume that norms will be turned into action; that is, that communities can be turned into agency, with people caring for each other, getting involved in collective enterprises and activities and acting together to change their circumstances (Taylor, 2003:38).

This consideration has potentially important ramifications for thinking about the creation and development linkages within communities, and in particular it imposes a consideration of the means and methods of activating citizens within the community level approach.

Without a doubt the notion of community as non-uniform presents a challenge for governments and agencies that, in the application and implementation of social policy, often take an area-based approach. This approach has been dominant in Europe since the late 1960s (e.g. in the Netherlands - Van Harberden and Raymakers, 1986) and is exemplified by the many stand-alone (issue specific) special initiatives aimed at addressing the particular problems of disadvantaged localities (Newton, 1999). Most of these types of initiatives have been relatively short-lived and often deployed in successive waves by governments focused on appealing to the electorate and winning elections (Hastings et al, 1996). In the UK, for example, the instigation from 2001 of Sports Action Zones (Frazer, 2002, Imrie and Raco, 2003) was indicative of both the dominance of geographical concerns for policy implementation and governmental belief in 'community' as a "central collective abstraction" (Levitas, 2000). To be sure these targeted programmes emerging from the 'social investment state' placed a strong emphasis on the value of state investment in human and social capital (Lister, 2004).

Community development logically then takes the definition of community and adds an action process to it to achieve outcomes that are commensurate with ones starting point, which is the definition of community. For Biddle and Foster (2011) when discussing health behaviour change, development in a community is a proactive activity achieved by seeking out the target community. In essence community development addresses commonality of interests to improve the 'life conditions' of those involved (Vail, 2007). Frisby and Millar (2002) in their study of low-income women's sport participation in Canada refer to community development in terms of a social action process that aims to change individuals' economic, social cultural and environmental situation. Many of the approaches to community sport development (CSD as it has been referred to in much of the literature e.g. Frisby and Millar, 2002, Bolton et al, 2008, Hylton and Totten, 2008) also involve the need for greater capacity

building. The available literatures on community development and capacity building are both respectively huge¹, however for this chapter it is sufficient to note that capacity building has been identified as a bottom-up process (Collins, 2003) that whilst relying on skilled workers allows development to be at the pace of local groups (Adams, 2011a). Furthermore capacity building in sports development primarily concerns sustainability in the civic arena and to that extent is concerned with ‘...giving citizens the opportunity to engage with each other rather than directly with a public authority’ (Stoker, 2006, p.194). On a broader note it is striking that according to development theory (Eade, 1997, Eade and Sayer, 2006) the ultimate aim of capacity building is empowerment which is vital “...if development is to be sustainable and centred in people” (Eade, 1997, p.1).

To fully consider the impact of sport and community development it is also necessary to outline the influence and importance of social capital theory in promoting local policy outcomes. In so doing it is possible to argue that the concept has become influential for two reasons in particular. First, social capital has provided a theoretical basis for promoting and interpreting the social benefits of sport organisation and participation, which has helped to explain how sport can be viewed as contributing to developing tolerance, trust, social cohesion, and adherence to moral frameworks (Putnam, 2000, Smith and Waddington, 2004, Halpern, 2005). Second, the dominant conceptualisation of social capital, based primarily on the writings of Robert Putnam, has focused attention on the voluntary sector around which sport globally is predominantly centred.

Like community, social capital is a contested term. This chapter only considers the version promoted by Robert Putnam, largely because it was this version that caught the political zeitgeist at the turn of the century (Fine, 2010), and became the social capital theory of choice that served to influence social policy aimed at instigating its creation in many western liberal democracies². Thus, in this context many community development outcomes expected of sport development relate to policy-maker expectations that voluntary sport activity will have clearly recognisable societal level outcomes. This policy focus but may have suffered an Anglophone bias outside of the UK. Canadian research on sport policy and social capital, for example, has highlighted how public policy can be informed and guided (see for example Canadian

Policy Research Initiative, 2005) whilst also interpreting and informing on grass roots sport experiences in light of policy applications of social capital (Donnelly and Kidd 2003, Sharpe, 2006 and Perks, 2007). Similarly Australian research has identified social capital as a key feature of sport and community development in rural communities (Tonts, 2005) and how policy intervention in football (soccer) can alter the community impact when creating social capital (Lock et al, 2008).

This approach to policymaking driven by the work of Putnam (1993 and 2000 in particular) has been referred to as the “democratic strain” (Lewandowski, 2006) of social capital. The key ideas that form the basis of much of the democratic strain of social capital can be found in the table below.

Table 1. Key assumptions of democratic social capital

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Networks and connections are of primary importance. • Bonding social capital occurs with people like us and reflects solidarity within groups • Bridging social capital occurs with people unlike us reflects linkages across social cleavages • Individuals create community via their normative capacity as social facts. • Individualism can be reconciled into collective action. • Normatively, trust and reciprocity are created or arise from social networks. • Civil society is idealised and voluntary associationalism is identified as both indicator and creator of social capital. • Voluntary associations (VSCs) and the volunteering occurring within them are privileged as the place and means to establish an active citizenry and a civic culture. • Expansion of voluntary associations ‘encouraged’ to increase capacity to fulfil functions ascribed to civil society by government, in particular promoting a vision of a normalised and centralised community. • Standardisation, linked to modernisation is necessary to manage this aspect of civil society |
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Governance, Sport and Community Development

As identified in the previous section, the development of communities has been taken to be a legitimate concern of government and policy makers. As such, understanding of the broader context of governmental action is important when examining community development and its potential relationship with sport development. This is especially the case as it has been widely recognised that the dominance of neo-liberal policy agendas in many countries from the 1980s onwards led to significant changes in the context of governmental action and, more generally, the relationship between

states and societies (Sørensen and Torfing, 2008). Broadly speaking, neo-liberal policies pursued by supranational bodies and national governments sought to 'roll back' the state with greater responsibility for public and collective action placed with private and voluntary sector organisations (Stoker, 1998). Two specific consequences of these policies have been that, first, the distinction between public, private and voluntary sectors has become blurred (Pierre and Stoker, 2000) and, second, the institutional landscape of public policy has become increasingly fragmented among a wide variety of organisations across these different sectors (Stoker, 2000). Each of these consequences has resonance with the institutions involved in sport and community development.

While international and national policies have provided impetus for much sport and community development work (Hylton and Totten, 2008), local state agencies are often key stakeholders in sport and community development. In the United Kingdom and Canada, which are just two examples cited in the literature, local public sector employees (Houlihan and White, 2002; Frisby and Millar, 2002) and local authorities more generally have commonly been strongly involved in efforts to use sport to address a variety of social objectives within local communities (Roberts, 2004; Bolton et al., 2008; Thilbault, Frisby and Kikulis, 1999). Beyond the local public sector, voluntary sector organisations are also often highlighted as important in contributing to sport and community development. In fact, it could well be argued that the history of voluntary sector sport clubs being central to the development of communities predates the current policy emphasis (Sport Council, 1988, Collins, 2003, Horch, 1998). A more recent additional trend, in line with neo-liberal policies referred to earlier, has been the emergence of an increasing number of voluntary sector, or non-governmental, organisations specifically orientated towards utilising sport to contribute to aspects of community development. In the UK, for example, a voluntary sector organisation named Catch22 was commissioned to deliver the government-funded Positive Futures sport and community inclusion programme. Vail (2007) also describes the contribution that Tennis Canada, a national governing body within the voluntary sector, made to leading a community development project.

This description of the 'landscape' of institutional stakeholders in sport and community development is necessarily brief. It should also be recognised that this

overview only captures a fraction of the array of organisations that could be considered to have influence on sport in specific communities³ and has largely ignored the numerous organisations from beyond the sport sector that may have an interest, albeit sometimes a more indirect one, in sport and community development. What is clear, however, is the applicability to sport and community development of the broader recognition of the complexity and fragmentation that exists across different areas of public policy (Skelcher, 2000). In turn, this complexity is a key facet of the contexts in which a shift from government to new modes of governance has been recognised (Pierre and Stoker, 2000).

Within the literature on new modes of governance, many authors identify a transition from hierarchical ‘government’ or market-based modes of co-ordination to governance based upon “self-organising, inter-organisational networks characterised by interdependence” (Rhodes, 1997, p15; Sørensen and Torfing, 2008). For Bingham (2011), the shift to network governance was not only a response to a fragmented institutional context but also a consequence of the realisation of the intractable nature of many, so called, ‘wicked issues’ such as those associated with community development. Authors have commented on the applicability to sport of the concept of network governance (Green and Houlihan, 2006; Lindsey, 2010b). In respect of the governance of communities, this applicability is highlighted by the increasing prominence of local partnerships and other forms of alliances involving sport organisations in a variety of different countries (e.g. Thilbault, Frisby and Kikulis, 1999, in the United States of America; Lindsey, 2009, in England; Alexander, Thilbault and Frisby, 2008, in Canada). Moreover, in the United Kingdom in particular, Bolton et al. (2008, p94) consider that the development of network governance “provided a new legitimacy to community sport development”.

In examining network governance, Bingham (2011) identifies a distinction between collaboration between organisations involved in the implementation of public policy and collaboration orientated towards public participation in governance. Both of these aspects are relevant to the contribution that sport can make to community development. The latter aspect has the more longstanding connection to community development which had its origins in “relationships with the state (central or local) in which demands are made for services” (Sihlongonyane, 2009, p140). In this respect,

some authors consider the transition to network governance to be a positive development which, through the inclusion of a wider range of actors and agents in the policy process, allows some transfer of power away from those who govern (in government) towards the governed (Rhodes, 1997, Bevir and Rhodes, 2003, Grix and Philpots, 2010). With relevance to the topic of this chapter, however, Bingham (2011) strikes a more cautious note in recognising that the membership of governance networks may not always be representative of particular communities. Similarly, with respect to local community sport, voluntary sports clubs are often viewed as both a mechanism for community development and as an authentic voice of the community itself (Adams, 2011a). However, this is by no means necessarily or universally the case. Lynn (2011) suggests that community organisations may not have the capacity to identify community needs or have their own standards of representative democracy and Adams (2011a) argues that the mutual aid aspect of voluntary sports clubs can impede the manner in which a club may interact with its geographically located community. Certainly, voluntary sports clubs can themselves be exclusive (at the very least in informal ways) (Torkildsen, 2005). Moreover, the competition between clubs and even across sports in many communities means that identifying representative voices from the community and voluntary sport sector can be problematical.

It is also important to consider collaborations that involve organisations in the implementation of public policy and their (potential) relationships to sport and community development. Partnerships orientated towards development in particular communities have been initiated, often as a result of mandatory government instruction (Bingham, 2011) and almost universally in the area-based initiatives described earlier in the chapter. Collaboration in such partnerships may be more closely associated with the bonding and bridging forms of social capital that are outlined in Table 1. It is here that something of a paradox exists, in that while bridging capital may be considered as more important to community development (Coalter, 2007), the effectiveness of collaboration is dependent on the “shared values and norms” (Bever and Rhodes, 2011, p205) that are a feature of bonding forms of social capital.

Nevertheless such collaboration may well be important to sports organisations that seek to contribute to community development. As has been recognised by authors

such as Coalter (2007) and Lawson (2005), sport is unlikely in isolation to make a significant contribution to development within communities. Therefore, linking with organisations from other policy sectors is essential for many sport organisations not only to improve programmes but also to access resources (Thilbault et al., 1999; Frisby and Millar, 2002). The extent to which sport organisations are themselves effectively included in broader collaborations associated with community development remains open to question and probably a large degree of local variation. Despite the increasing prominence of the potential contribution that sport can make to community development in international and national policies, this is a view that is by no means a view universally shared within other policy sectors. Houlihan and Lindsey (forthcoming) note that the health sector, and in particular the medical profession, in the United Kingdom has not reciprocated the enthusiasm demonstrated by stakeholders in the sport sector for mutual collaboration. Even where collaboration is established, organisations from better resourced and sectors that are more established in community development work, such as health and regeneration, may hold greater power than those from the sport sector.

A further linked question that remains is the extent to which network governance may ultimately be effective and efficient in generating outcomes associated with community development. As Houlihan and Lindsey (2008) indicate, this is a question that presents significant methodological problems. Nevertheless, across literature associated with both sport and other policy sectors, a large range of factors are recognised as being important in contributing to the success or otherwise of collaboration. Bingham (2011), for example, identifies factors such as institutional design, leadership, trust-building and shared understanding as important in contributing to effective collaboration. Organisational capacity is also required in order for effective collaboration and, in this regard, it is notable that a study in Canada by Frisby et al. (2004, p123) found that local government leisure organisations, a likely key organisation in ensuring sport contributes to community development, largely “lacked the capacity to effectively manage the numerous and complex partnerships they were engaged in”. While this, of course, represents an isolated study in a single country, perhaps the best that we can say is that there is likely to be huge diversity in the contribution that collaboration involving sport organisations makes to community development.

The foregoing also largely ignores ongoing relations of hierarchical power that may sit alongside or operate within network governance arrangements. Despite neo-liberal policies limiting the capacity of governments to directly deliver services and intervene in a number of policy areas, a number of authors suggest that governments retain a key role in attempting to 'steer' governance networks (Leach and Percy-Smith, 2001) and as a result influence practices such as those that may contribute to development through sport and within communities. It is also widely recognised that governmental steering uses a variety of distinctive policy tools or instruments, the implementation of which can also be widely identified in sport and community development. Particularly prominent among such policy tools are those associated with the New Public Management (NPM) movement that emerged alongside the neo-liberal policies of the 1980s and 1990s. Despite the increased prominence of network governance representing something of a reaction to the fragmentation that resulted from NPM, the development of practices of performance management and measurement continue to have a 'far reaching and enduring' influence (Heinrich, 2011, p262). Across a number of countries, governmental target setting, monitoring and evaluation have become commonplace in sport development and have significant implications for practices within communities (Nicholson, Hoye and Houlihan, 2011). In the UK, for example, the priorities of local sport development partnerships have been significantly influenced by nationally developed targets for community participation in sport (Lindsey, 2010a). That this singular example may also be more generally relevant is demonstrated by Bevir and Rhodes (2011, p213) who state that systems of performance management and target setting have, in a number of countries, "spread ... to embrace the control of localities".

Understanding of this control, and its relevance to sport and community development, is enhanced when we consider the combination of widespread systems of performance management with other governmental policy tools. The traditional policy tool of allocation of funding has been linked in many countries to successful adoption and achievement of performance management practices and targets (Cheung, 2011). Again, the UK represents an indicative example in which much lottery funding for sport and communities is distributed according to centralised application procedures and associated targets (Garrett, 2004; Lindsey, 2010b). However, as Coalter (2007)

recognises, the contributions that sport can make to aspects of community development are extremely difficult to evaluate, let alone capture in largely quantitative performance targets. While Frisby and Millar (2002) suggest that those involved in community development need to 'reconceptualise' the quantitative accountability systems inherent in NPM, an alternative interpretation is that the dominance of such systems limits the potential for community development through sport. Overall, as Peters (2008 cited in Le Gales, 2011) recognises, the possibilities of network governance for sport and community development may well be tempered by the centralising tendencies associated with the use of policy tools such as those identified.

The consequences for sport and community development of this balance of local responsibility and external control are impossible to judge without significant empirical research and are likely to be divergent in different localities and sites of community action. Both Vail (2007) and Frisby and Millar (2002) highlight that community development does not sit easily with the tradition of top-down management that exists within sport. In this regard it is notable that Sellers (2011) cites Skocpol (2003) to argue that increased centralisation may contribute to the weakening of social capital. Certainly, in the sporting context, authors such as Adams (2011a) have suggested that increased national direction of voluntary sports clubs may limit their capacity to independently address community needs. Nevertheless, there is also evidence from voluntary sector sports clubs and other local sporting organisations to support Bevir and Rhodes' (2011) assertion that local agencies may successfully resist centralising influence of modern policy tools. Such resistance to authority certainly is in line with a tradition concern of community development (Sihlongonyane, 2009) and Harris et al. (2009) point to the resistance engendered amongst a proportion of voluntary sport clubs by the 'blanket approach' towards them adopted by national sport agencies in England.

UK Policy contexts for sport and community development

It is in the context of active citizenship and civil renewal that New Labour's (1997-2007) record of producing policy geared towards including community action in the delivery of public services should be borne in mind (e.g. Home Office, 1998, Lewis,

2005, Kendall, 2009). The term community, used rhetorically, functionally and concretely from 1997-2010 by New Labour in a variety of political, policy and governance situations (Finlayson, 2003, Prideaux, 2005) facilitated a pragmatic approach to governing. Used rhetorically community signalled ‘ways of thinking’ (Finlayson, 2003) about governing and provided a naturalised and unifying collective response to a social fragmented society. For former Prime Minister Blair community thus implied a “recognition of interdependence but not overweening government power. It accepts that we are better able to meet the forces of change and insecurity through working together” (Tony Blair cited in Levitas, 2000: 191).

The importance of New Labour’s modernisation project should not be overstated, and the subject has been covered in some depth elsewhere⁴, but it ~~is~~ was part of the fundamental architecture of governance that enabled collectivism, civil society, social capital, social inclusion to become wrapped up in sport and community development. Certainly the idioms of pragmatism and eclecticism (Newman, 2001), when allied to social and public policy, enabled New Labour to redefine and re-energise a conceptualisation of community as both antidote to the excessive individualism of unfettered neo-liberalism, and as a positive force for developing the collective values of reciprocity and solidarity (Avineri and de-Shalit, 1992, Arai and Pedlar, 2003). Thus during New Labour’s period of office (1997-2007) notions of sport development became closely allied to community development. This aspect of community sport development played to concerns for a normative and palliative commonality that was viewed as important for the well being of all and not just as a residual service for the poor and excluded (Bolton et al, 2008).

The emphasis on community and of community empowerment in delivering services has arguably come to have a somewhat hegemonic hold over notions of developing mixed-economies of welfare in the UK. Indeed under the auspices of the UK Coalition government⁵ and promoted in particular by the Prime Minister, David Cameron, ‘Big Society’⁶ offers clear potential for community development, in the guise of civil society, to become both the object and subject of governmental policy objectives (Smith, 2010, Alcock, 2010). Big Society as a political vision is replete with localist intentions to ‘downshift’ power and the operation of public interest decision making away from central government to citizens and organisations at the

local and community level (Bubb, 2011, Cabinet Office, 2010, Stoker, 2004). Indeed the notion of localism, where individuals, groups and organisations in a community are increasingly encouraged or empowered to deliver services locally for the consumption of local citizens, presents continuity in the British political establishment between consecutive governments of different political traditions. Certainly New Labour's focus on the promotion of a modernised, self-regulating form of networked governance (Stoker, 2004), which focused on the creation of social capital, collaborative partnerships and a mixed economy of welfare (Jordan, 2006) presents itself as a forerunner to the 'Big Society' in meeting and facilitating local policy objectives. The key point in this respect is to note that these processes have become embedded within, and contiguous to, the role of sport development in the UK.

The local nature of sport development practice in the UK together with the importance of voluntary action signalled the importance that New Labour attached to sport policy 1997-2007. During this period the relationship between sport development, social policy and community development in the UK revolved around what former Sports Minister Richard Caborn referred to as the 'sport for good' agenda (cited by Collins, 2010, p.368). Moreover social capital was identified as the key mechanism to achieve societal level benefits via the mundane promotion of sport participation. In the UK 'new localism' (Stoker, 2006) became prominent in sport development structures, allowing for the devolution of power and resources to the front line. New localism also incorporated agreed national minimum standards and policy priorities (Corry and Stoker, 2002, Stoker, 2004) and prescribed a set of circumstances for the continual enhancement and maintenance of voluntary participatory experiences (see for example DCMS/Strategy Unit, 2002, Sport England, 2007).

It is where new localism, network governance and community development meet that social capital has had much purchase in recent years. It is arguably the case that the localist intentions of the governance narrative endorsed social capital as *the* tool to promote issues of connectiveness, trust, civic renewal and active citizenship (Levitas, 2000, Maloney et al, 2000, Imrie and Raco, 2003, Sixsmith and Boneham, 2003, Stoker, 2004, 2006). To be sure much of the focus of social capital and community development has been linked to Putnam's assertions that voluntary associationalism is the most favoured site of social capital formation in western democracies. This

position subsequently created the political framework for privileging sport development within civil society as a means of community development.

In the UK the emergence of the Conservative led Coalition government's ideological concern with reducing the size and scope of the state has further promoted an emphasis on the voluntary action of citizens (Smith, 2010). In short, individual citizens operating within the realms of civil society are viewed politically as policy agents who can provide services more efficiently and effectively for fellow citizens through a networked alliance, where governance seeks to simultaneously empower and enable. Certainly the emphasis on volunteerism and the potential for social benefits that may emanate from individual citizen involvement in collective activity has been taken up by sport and sport development policy with gusto (Adams, 2011b, Nicholson and Hoyer, 2008, Coalter, 2007, Blackshaw and Long, 2005).

The importance of social capital within a modernised policy context can be felt in the drive to mainstream and centralise active citizenship within a networked approach to establishing civic renewal and community development (Finlayson, 2003, Morisson, 2003). Certainly the high dependence on volunteers in Britain to provide the majority of sport participation opportunities (Taylor et al, 2003) highlights the importance of social capital theory to interpreting sport development practices in the UK. Moreover the creation of the Social Exclusion Unit in December 1997, the Neighbourhood Renewal Unit in 2001 and Active Community Unit in 2002 focused attention on government aspirations to empower and activate citizens and communities. This example of structural capacity building clearly illustrates the need, to ally structural top down policy frameworks with corresponding bottom up policy tools. The implication for sport and community development is that to fully enable citizens to develop the capacity for the formation of social capital there must be an "institutionally thick arena" (Imrie and Raco, 2003) surrounding the context of implementation. This brief overview of sport and community development in the UK has highlighted how and why social capital, under the gaze of NPM and allied to wider community development concerns, became a key fixture of the accountability culture in the UK during the period 1997-2007.

Conclusions

As the first parts of this chapter demonstrated, conceptualising ‘community’ is a notoriously ‘slippery’ task. That there are potentially multiple conceptions of ‘community’ leaves room for policy makers to appropriate and utilise particular favoured definitions and to conceive of the development of communities in particular ways. To some degree this has presented an opportunity for policy advocates to make the case for sport as a potential contributor to community development. For other sporting organisations, voluntary sports clubs in particular, notions of community espoused within policy do not necessarily correspond with those held by individual club members or by those representing the agencies allocated the task of making a contribution to community development. This potential dissonance has only been heightened by the increasing prominence of the equally slippery concept of social capital which has been commonly linked with both community and sport development.

Advancement of social capital theories is also strongly connected with the development of new forms of network governance. Certainly, the promotion of collaboration generally and within particular sport and community-orientated programmes in particular, can be strongly associated with and may potentially contribute to, closer ties within particular communities. Partnership and collaboration across different communities and interests is likely to be more challenging in practice. Furthermore, some ‘traditional’ notions of community development as resistance fit less easily with collaborative approaches to governance. Recognising that network governance may still sit within and alongside more established hierarchies of power (McDonald, 2005), therefore, presents both opportunities and threats to those who wish to use sport to contribute to community development.

In terms of these threats, in the UK at least, it can be argued that the association of network governance with governmental mechanisms facilitated the top down steerage given to sport agencies such as national governing bodies (NGBs) and locally delivered sport opportunities via voluntary sports clubs (VSCs). Subsequently by imposing conditions on NGBs and VSCs, government sought to shape preferences (Hay, 2002) and exert control whilst not formally undermining the authority of particular actors (Green, 2007). Moreover the focus of NPM on measurable evidence

as the underpinning feature of policy development (Solesbury, 2001, Sanderson, 2002) also served to reinforce and legitimate the democratic strain of social capital, which itself has sought to identify ‘causality’, ‘culprits’ and solutions for policy problems involving perceived social capital deficits (Putnam, 2000). The conditionality associated with the promotion of social capital and community development through sport in the UK tended to reflect broader governmental concerns with democratic renewal and the strategic role of social capital. Consequently the operational and strategic condition for sport development, at local and grassroots levels has been located within a framework predicated on compliance and conformity. Based on this scenario it is questionable whether community development, a process that enables and empowers (Vail, 2007) and which, according to Pedlar (1996, p.14), allows for ‘learning and doing for oneself’, could occur in the UK given the predominant need to generate evidence of efficiency and effectiveness to serve the top-down nature of sport policy (see Coalter, 2007, Grix and Phillpots 2010, Houlihan, and Green, 2009).

These arguments and the illustration of the UK case certainly raise further questions regarding the potential contribution that sport can make to community development in the global context. A clear signal from this brief overview of sport development and community development is that policy makers, need a clearer understanding and perspective on what sport can and cannot do in and for particular communities. Considering how community development outcomes may be achieved, and by whom, presents a further set of questions and challenges. Ultimately, there is unlikely ever to be agreement on these issues even from solely within the sport sector. Certainly both sport and community need greater articulation between policymakers and practitioners if we are to move beyond simplistic monolithic and one-dimensional accounts that offer little to those implementing sport at the community level.

¹ For capacity building Eade (1997) offers a respected overview and Verity (2007) provides a fulsome overview of the literature also see Adams (2008) in relation to sports development. Plant (1974) and Taylor (2003) give a flavour of the community development literature, while Pedlar (1996) and Perks (2003 2007?) provide two examples of application to sport and leisure fields. It is important to note that social capital should not be confused with community development, clearly the former is important for the latter to occur, but they are separate and distinct concepts.

² Many sophisticated accounts of social capital can be found in the plethora of literature that exists on social capital including Bartkus and Davis (2009), Lewandowski (2006), Field (2003), Johnston and Percy-Smith (2003), Baron, Field and Schuller (2000). For accounts of social capital that focus on sport, and sport development policy see for example Adams (2011b), Nicholson and Hoyer (2008), Coalter (2007), Blackshaw and Long (2005).

³ Amongst the organisations that have not been considered are those from the private sector. Although some private sector organisations are involved in sport and community development, such organisations are less common in comparison to those from public and voluntary sectors (Hyton and Totton, 2008).

⁴ For overviews of modernisation see Finlayson (2003), Pratchett (2004), Rose (2001) and Coates (2005) – each of which is presented within its political context. Modernisation and sport is covered in many contexts but see Houlihan and Green (2009) who examine two major national sport agencies in the UK, Adams (2011a or 2011b?) who investigates tensions between modernisation and mutual aid at the grass-roots level and Green (2008 2007?) who examines the governance and operation of sport under modernised conditions.

⁵ The coalition government came about as a result of the 2010 general election. The major partner is the Conservative party led by Prime-Minister David Cameron and the Liberal Democrats led by Deputy Prime-Minister Nick Clegg. These two political parties secured between them almost 60% of the vote.

⁶ Big Society, according to Cabinet Office minister Francis Maude, is a reaction to the failure of the ‘big government’ of the previous government and involves clear aspects of localism in mobilising the British heritage of civil society and social action (2010). The key drivers for the Coalition government in achieving a ‘Big Society’ are consequently volunteering and philanthropy and a desire to, in the words of the current Prime Minister; connect ‘private capital to investment in social projects (Cameron, 2010).

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